

VZCZCXRO6451  
OO RUEHMA RUEHPA  
DE RUEHOS #0367/01 2630629  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 190629Z SEP 08  
FM AMCONSUL LAGOS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0168  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RHMCSUU/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEWMFD/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000367

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - HANDLE ACCORDINGLY  
SIPDIS

DOE FOR GPERSON, CHAYLOCK  
TREASURY FOR DFIELD, AIERONIMO, RHALL

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EPET](#) [ENRG](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: IJAW LEADERS REPORTEDLY WORKING TO STEM  
VIOLENCE

REF: A. LAGOS 366  
[1](#)B. LAGOS 365

Sensitive But Unclassified; Handle Accordingly

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Chief Edwin Clark, former Minister of Information, and other Ijaw elders have been engaged in talks with leaders of militant groups to attempt to halt the "oil war" (Ref B, Septel), according to a report in the September 17 Vanguard. Although the militant leaders have agreed to call back their "boys", who were deployed to damage oil installations in Rivers State and other parts of the region, a major Shell pipeline in the Degema local government area (LGA) has already been blown up, and there had been an "attempt" on Chevron's Idama flow station in Rivers State, the report stated. The article said Clark called on the Federal Government to restrain military forces in the area, and to declare "a truce" with the militants through the end of the year as a way to assure that the work of the Technical Committee and development of the Niger Delta could go forward. Despite repeated efforts, post has been unable to reach Chief Clark or other Ijaw leaders to confirm the report. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The Vanguard newspaper reported on Wednesday, September 17 that former Minister of Information and Ijaw leader Edwin Clark "and other Ijaw elders" were engaged in "secret" talks with leaders of militant groups in the region to halt the "oil war" announced by Jomo Gbomo, spokesperson for the movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), on September 13 (Ref A). According to the Vanguard, the only newspaper that carried the story, the result of the talks was that some militant leaders had agreed to withdraw their "boys", who had already been deployed to damage oil installations in Rivers State and other parts of the region. According to the paper, before the news of the agreement could get to the field commanders, the militants had destroyed a major crude oil pipeline owned by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) at Bakana Front in the Degema Local Government Area (LGA) in Rivers State. The paper also noted that there had been a "fresh" attempt to blow up the Chevron flow station at Idama, Rivers State. The paper noted that "the elders were disturbed that soon after the inauguration of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta and the announcement of the creation of the Ministry of the Niger Delta, the crisis in Rivers State had robbed the region of the peace required by government to proceed with plans for the region.

¶3. (U) According to the press report, Chief Clark said "I have assured (sic) our boys to maintain peace and that I would be going to Abuja immediately to carry my message of peace to the Federal Government" The article also said Clark would ask the Federal Government to declare a truce in the region until December 31, 2008 so as to allow the Federal Government to go forward with development of the region. The paper quoted Clark: "We need this for the Federal Government to show its sincerity and commitment to the development of the Niger Delta. I am happy to say that I have spoken to the boys to drop the idea of full-scale war in the Niger Delta and allow peace to reign and allow dialogue between the elders and the Federal Government. I am confident they will call off their declaration of war."

¶4. (SBU) According to the Vanguard, Chief Clark said that the Federal Government must be seen in the creeks as having control over the JTF. "A situation in which they engage in activities inimical to the real intention of the Federal Government is unacceptable and the Federal Government should, therefore, give strict instruction to the Service Chiefs to control their soldiers." (Comment: Nigerian media have carried reports that in the past few weeks the JTF has repeatedly overstepped its mandate and carried out attacks on militants that either also targeted civilians or were judged as excessively violent. Post has not been able to verify the reports. End Comment.) The article also reported that Clark said the militants were unhappy with the secret trial of Henry Okah, and that he called the trial "incompatible with the search for peace in the Niger Delta."

LAGOS 00000367 002.2 OF 002

#### Ijaw Youth "Strategy Session" Ends

-----

¶5. (U) The article also noted that Ijaw youth leaders met at Oporoza in Delta State for their 47th strategy session. According to the paper, the youths called on the Federal Government to withdraw the military, which they alleged had murdered 20 persons including women and children and had razed 14 Ijaw communities over "the last few days." The youths also condemned the secret trial and incarceration of Henry Okah as "illegal and unacceptable to the Ijaw nation."

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Despite continuous efforts beginning over the weekend, post has been unable to reach Chief Clark or other Ijaw interlocutors. Inability to reach these Ijaw leaders has in the past been an indication that they are in the creeks, where cellphone connectivity may be limited. End Comment.  
BLAIR